

Message Text

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ACTION EB-11

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FM AMEMBASSY ACCRA

TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 2902

C O N F I D E N T I A L ACCRA 1506

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: ETRN GH

SUBJ: CIVAIR NEGOTIATIONS

REF: STATE 049736

1. SUMMARY. PURSUANT INSTRUCTIONS REFTEL, EMBASSY HELD INFORMAL DISCUSSIONS WITH DIRECTOR CIVIL AVIATION DWEMOH AND ACTING PRINCIPAL SECRETARY, MFA, QUARM. WHILE THEY CLEARLY UNDERSTOOD THAT THERE LITTLE IF ANY FLEXIBILITY IN PRESENT US POSITION, THEY BOTH STRESSED DESIRABILITY OF CONTINUING NEGOTIATIONS AND TALKS AS SOON AS PRACTICAL. AFTER TAKING FUTHTER SOUNDINGS, QUARM PROMISED ADVISE EMBASSY EARLY NEXT WEEK AS TO GHANAIAAN VIEWS. EMBASSY THINKS THERE REAL POSSIBILITY THAT PANAM MIGHT BE SUBJECT TO ABRUPT SUSPENSION OF RIGHTS IF GOG FACED WITH FLATLY NEGATIVE ATTITUDE ON PART USG. BELIEVE DELEGATION SHOULD THREFORE PLAN COME TO ACCRA APPROXIMATELY APRIL 17. END SUMMARY.

2. EMBOFF MADE INFORMAL APPROACH MARCH 14 TO DWMOH SPECIFCALLY FOLLOWING PARAS 2 AND 3 REFTEL. DWEMOH SAID AS FAR AS HE CONCERNED, NEXT ROUND OF NEGOTIATIONS COULD BE POSTPONED,BUT THAT HE DID NOT MAKE DECISION. SAID HIS COMMISSIONER (MAJOR ASANTE) HAD ALREADY WANTED TO FORECLOSE PANAM SERVICE ACCRA BUT THAT COMMISSIONER FOREIGN AFFAIRS (MAJOR BAAH) HAD INTERVENED AND TOLD ASANTE MOVE AGAINST PANAM WOULD BE PREMATURE IN VIEW OF CONFIDENTIAL

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JOINT STATEMENT AT NOVEMBER TALKS IN WASHINGTON, WHICH REFERRED

TO RESUMPTION OF NEGOTIATIONS IF POSSIBLE NOT LATER THAN MARCH. DWEMOH SUGGESTED EMBASSY APPROACH MFA (RATHER THAN HIMSELF OR MINISTRY OF TRANSPORT AND COMMUNICATIONS) WITH DEPARTMENT'S PROPOSAL. DWEMOH SAID HE WOULD REPORT TO ASANTE THAT EMBASSY HAD RESPONDED CONCERNING NEXT ROUND OF TALKS BUT THAT HE WOULD NOT VOLUNTEER DETAILS OF DISCUSSION. (OUR ESTIMATE IS THAT DWEMOH, WHO IS WORRIED ABOUT HIS POSITION AND UNDOUBTEDLY HARRASSED BY HIS COMMISSIONER, WILL HAVE TO TELL ASANTE THE GIST OF THE DEPARTMENT'S MESSAGE.)

3. AMBASSADOR, ACCOMPANIED BY EMBOFF, CALLED ON SAM QUARM, ACTING PRINCIPAL SECRETARY MFA, MARCH 15, TO REVIEW PROBLEM, AGAIN INFORMALLY. QUARM LISTENED CAREFULLY, WITH NOTETAKER AND TWO OTHER MFA OFFICERS PRESENT. HE SAID GHANA WAS INTERESTED NOT SO MUCH IN ECONOMIC CONSIDERATIONS AS IN PRINCIPLE OF RECIPROCITY, AND THAT MINISTRY OF TRANSPORT VIEWS HAD TO BE TAKEN INTO ACCOUNT. HE SAID HE WOULD EXPLORE MATTER AND GET IN TOUCH ON INFORMAL BASIS WITH EMBASSY EARLY NEXT WEEK (WEEK OF MARCH 18), BUT THAT HE THOUGHT MAIN CONSIDERATION WOULD BE TO AVOID ANY IMPRESSION THAT US SOUGHT TO DEFER INDEFINITELY RESUMPTION OF NEGOTIATIONS. HE THEREFORE THOUGHT THAT US TEAM SHOULD BE PREPARED TO COME TO ACCRA TO RESUME TALKS ON OR ABOUT APRIL 17.

4. COMMENT: BOTH DWEMOH AND QUARM FULLY UNDERSTAND AS RESULT OUR PRESENTATIONS THAT THERE IS LITTLE OR NO LIKELIHOOD US ALONE CAN CLOSE GAP AT POSSIBLE APRIL NEGOTIATING SESSION. HOWEVER, THEY OBVIOUSLY FEAR THAT FAILURE OF US TO AGREE TO RESUME TALKS SOON WILL PROVOKE TERMINATION OF PANAM PRIVILEGES. THEREFORE BELIEVE DEPT SHOULD MAKE PREPARATIONS FOR US DEL COME TO ACCRA FOR APRIL 17 RESUMPTION. GDS.
HADSEL

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